The Pagan Library

Requiem (for the Giants)

Eileen McGann

400 years ago a seed, chance fallen, grew
In virgin forest land that never white man knew
In woodland silence it rose and flourished
By northern wind was shaped, from earth and sky was nourished

White pine, silver birch
Sing their names in requiem
Giants of our northern land
We'll never see your likes again

200 years ago the giants ruled the Shield
'Til white man came and saw the profits they could yield
They fell like thunder and left no trace
But giant stumps that stand as headstones in their place

In north Ontario some giants still remain
Though few in number now the axe-man comes again
What will you tell them when your children ask you why
Our last remaining forest giants had to die

And what gives them the right I ask
To take what's not their own
To kill a living beauty that 400 years has grown
To take and sell our heritage to fill pockets for a day
And when this crop is gone, what will they say
And when this crop is gone and the trees are gone
The wild is gone and the beasts are gone
And the tourist gone and the money gone
What will they say?

White pine...

Silver birch...

Requiem...

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